



West Point cadet battalion, now a regiment, on parade: formation includes whole body of 1,334 cadets.

THE Hudson has often been called "the Rhine of America." As far as picturesqueness of natural scenery is concerned, possibly there are recently returned Americans who would say that it is the Rhine rather than the Hudson that is flattered by the comparison. "Over There," the feature of the Rhine scenery that most impresses voyagers from the New World is the succession of ancient castles, most of them in ruins, that dot the banks of the famous river that has been so long the bone of Franco-German contention. We are short of ruins on this side, so the foreign article has the attraction of the exotic. Old castles especially stir the sense of the romantic. They awaken in the imagination tales of the age when chivalry was in flower. There may, moreover, be latent in many of us some faint instincts of ancestral connection with the golden glories of which these castles are the broken vestiges and monuments.

Rounding the Highlands of the Hudson at West Point, however, one comes suddenly on a great Gothic structure which might well carry the mind's eye back to the Rhine. In its massive gray bulk, its castellated square towers and frowning aspect of command of the river approaches in either direction, the fortification that so fitly marks the situation of the nation's great military academy strikes the beholder as the very embodiment of the spirit of medieval feudalism—of an age when fighting was the chief occupation of the people and the only career open to men of "gentle" blood and high ambition. Yet there is nothing ruinous in the aspect of West Point's grim bastions. Ancient as their architecture may be, they are aggressively up-to-date in their construction. Their strength is the strength of America—the strength of youth.

Vague thoughts of this sort were called out by the challenging aspect of the big stone tower when I faced it on a recent spring afternoon upon descending at the West Point station after a two hours' run on the West Shore road from New York. The young kinsman whom I had last seen as a rather lively boy of 12 was there to meet me. Now he was a "plebe" of nine months' standing. In his gray uniform, his straight figure and soldierly bearing, the little fellow I knew had undergone a striking transformation. Yet I knew the boy in the smiling eyes of this fine young fellow that grasped my hand. As we ascended the hill to the great quadrangle of buildings surrounding the parade ground, I found him as likable as ever. There was something charming in his enthusiasm for his chosen calling and for the historic school of which he had become a part. And the charm was not lessened

The West Point of Today

Impressions During a Flying Visit to the Nation's Storied War School

By PAUL TYNER

by a suggestion of childhood's sweet innocence in the boy's undoubted manliness. He blushing turned aside the well-worn jests about future fame as a general by glowing expatiation of the appeal to all that was best in a cadet, in the splendid traditions of West Point, of the high standard of character and conduct that were maintained there, and of the serious effort required on the part of every man to do his full duty.

The discipline must be especially severe during the first or plebe year on a youngster who had carried off the honors in class and athletic field in his Middle West town high school, had been a popular favorite and editor of the school magazine. No home leave for a whole year. No dances. No shining place on the football eleven or the baseball nine. Held to strict accountability for every moment of time day and night; summoned from bed at 6 a. m. by the bugle's reveille seconded by a cannon's boom and the persistent ringing of a big brass gong in the dormitory corridor. Then it's away to the parade ground in response to further bugle calls for the ceremony of salute to the flag and the punctilious parade in formation of fours to the big mess hall.

My young relative took me through this mess room and explained the etiquette of its tables whereat the plebe is reduced to due and humble reverence for the

upper class men. He explained, however, that under the present administration hazing has really been abolished and with it the ancient strong-arm methods, under which when a plebe did not pass the bread or the butter promptly enough, he received a forcible reminder of his duty in the shape of a glass or a plate thrown in his face. Democracy is all very well but an "officer and a gentleman" must be taught deference to his seniors.

"All that sort of Prussianism," the boy told me earnestly, "is now frowned upon as contrary to the true American spirit." Here, as in the library, the walls are lined with portentous portraits of American generals in full dress. Everything is neat and clean as a new pin and the great airy kitchens opening from the mess hall with their polished ranges, shining nickel-plated soup caldrons and coffee urns and brilliant copper batteries *de cuisine* are a credit to the management. My youthful kinsman assured me that the "eats" are really good; the fare is as substantial as plentiful and well-cooked. I can assure anxious mothers all over the land that their boys at West Point certainly have every appearance of being well-fed. And their teeth are well looked after, as well as their table manners.

Just now, here and there, the dormitories are a bit crowded, because of a large increase in the number of cadets since the war; but new and handsome buildings are nearing completion. These will make it possible to have not more than two cadets in a room. Strict attention is paid to sanitation and hygiene and the army medical officers of the post seem to have a high appreciation of preventive medicine. When anything, which in the world outside West Point is regarded as a "slight symptom" in the shape of a "cold," manifests itself the victim is promptly quarantined and kept under watch. But it appears that the boys consider any one of their number who succeeds in getting into hospital for a week as much to be envied. It means a welcome respite in the eternal grind of drills and parades and inspections and lessons. Of course, the healthy-minded and healthy-bodied youngster does not linger in hospital precincts. When he is rested, he is only too eager to get back on the job.

While life at West Point is not all cakes and ale it has its ameliorations. Foremost of these ranks the gymnasium and the place given to field athletics. In a visit to the gymnasium, I felt that the whole place breathed the atmosphere of that joyous enthusiasm which, more than anything else, expresses the spirit of youth. Something of "the glory that was Greece" is brought back by the vigor and vim and the light-



United States Military Academy shield and seal. Motto: "Duty, Honor, Country."

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